



# Maricopa County

Department of Public Health

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October 25, 2002

Dear Resident:

Since the tragic deaths of 5-year-old, Davy Luna of Glendale and 5-year-old Zach Stalls of Peoria, Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Environmental Services Department have been working around the clock to discover what happened to these children.

What we know is that both boys died from a rare form of amoebic meningitis. This type of meningitis is not contagious and is usually contracted through the inhalation of water with the amoeba through the nose, such as when diving, or submerging your head in water. The amoeba can be found in warm stagnant bodies of fresh water, such as lakes, rivers, and hot springs, unchlorinated swimming pools, and moist soil.

As soon as the diagnosis was made, the County began testing water everywhere a 5-year-old boy and the amoeba could have come into contact. This included drinking water, puddles, pools, spas, bathtubs, filters, fountains, playgrounds, lakes, and retention basins. Today, we are awaiting the test results from the water samples and are still looking for other potential sources. The County has been in contact with each of the boy's families to try to discover any links between the two boys. The Arizona Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta have assisted and consulted on the investigation.

We have received many calls from residents with questions about the risk of contracting meningitis and the safety of standing water and drinking water. During this investigation, water samples from the Rose Valley Water Company, which provides water to this area, were shown to be below standards. The water company began chlorinating the water on Wednesday, October 23, 2002, by order of the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. The water company is in the process of purifying their system and will be installing a permanent chlorination process.

Although our testing for the amoeba is not complete, we do understand that there are many questions that residents need answered.

The County believes the best way to answer these questions is to invite residents to a **Public Meeting this Monday, October 28 at Sunrise Mountain High School, 21200 North 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue at 7 p.m.**

Sincerely,

**Jonathan B. Weisbuch**

Jonathan B. Weisbuch, M.D., M.P.H.  
Maricopa County Chief Health Officer  
Director of Public Health